

The Public Value of the Arts

The arts create public value by increasing educational, social, civic or economic capital for communities. Former NEA Chair, John Frohmyer once said, "*Creativity is the currency of the future.*" **In many ways, the arts are the R&D of the creative ecosystem that underpins much of California's economic health and vibrancy.**

FACTS

- In his book, *The Rise of the Creative Class and How It's Transforming Work, Leisure, Community and Everyday Life*, Carnegie Mellon University professor of Economic Development Dr. Richard Florida states: "*The bottom line is that cities need a people climate even more today than they need a business climate. This means supporting creativity across the board--in all of its various facets and dimensions--and building a community that is attractive to creative people, not just to high-tech companies. As former Seattle mayor Paul Schell once said, success lies in 'creating a place where the creative experience can flourish.'* Instead of subsidizing companies, stadiums and retail centers, communities need to be open to diversity and invest in the kinds of lifestyle options and amenities people really want. In fact, you cannot be a thriving high-tech center if you don't do this." (The Rise of the Creative Class, Florida, p. 283)
- **California ranks highly in Florida's list of creative cities;** San Francisco (1), San Diego (3), Los Angeles (12) and Sacramento (22) are among the leading areas in the country. Naturally the arts, along with science, are at the forefront in building creative capital.
- **If California stops investing in creativity, we will be surpassed by other regions of the country and by regions outside of the United States.**
- **The arts are an integral form of cultural expression that leads to validating identity and citizenship,** thus legitimizing, for many communities, the struggle to enfranchise themselves. Cultural citizenship is about claiming and expanding the rights in the community that stand for social change, diversity and institutional reform. Participation in civil, political, and social arenas is a natural example of cultural citizenship.
- **Cultural diversity is a valued asset.** The state is often called the most diverse place on the planet. The arts build cultural bridges, contribute towards cross-cultural understanding, strengthen the association between identity and citizenship, and enhance the quality of life.
- **Building cultural bridges through the arts makes California stronger and wiser for its diversity, both internationally and at home** Cultural diversity can increase understanding among peoples, making us whole and strong. Left unattended, it can be a dividing force creating suspicion and resentment. It is through the arts that we bridge these gaps, and cross real and imaginary borders that prevent us from reaching our highest potential.

